

# **SPD Employee Continuing Education**

## **Training Guides**



## **Customer Service**

**SUPPLY, PROCESSING & DISTRIBUTION  
CONTINUING EDUCATION**

**CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Upon completion of this session, participants will be able to:

- ◆ Define customer service
- ◆ Identify customers
- ◆ Discuss telephone etiquette
- ◆ Discuss successful personal contacts
- ◆ List important actions for customer service

**Content**

1. Definition – The art of knowing who your customers are, anticipating their needs and delivering the goods and services required in an efficient, economical, timely and correct way, as well as promptly correcting any lapse in the provision of those goods and services.
2. Identifying Customers
  - a. Patients (Veterans)
  - b. Clinicians
  - c. Vendor Representatives
  - d. Co-workers
1. Telephone Etiquette
  - a. Answer promptly – no more than three rings
  - b. Identify: department, name, and offer assistance
  - c. Speak clearly
  - d. Understand the need before concluding the call by verifying the information
  - e. Record the caller's name, location, and call back number
  - f. Let the caller know the time required to deliver
1. Successful Personal Contacts
  - a. Know your customer
  - b. Anticipate needs
  - c. Follow through
  - d. Admit and correct mistakes

- e. Offer assistance
- f. Treat your customers with the dignity you would expect from them
- g. Reflection of hospital and department

1. Important Actions for Customer Service
  - a. Post hours of operation
  - b. Post telephone and pager numbers
  - c. Keep voice mail greetings current
  - d. Discuss potential changes before implementing change
  - e. Address customer concerns before implementing change
  - f. Keep staff informed and involved in changes
  - g. Communicate changes in products and services
  - h. Develop rapport with customers and meet on a regular basis
  - i. Look for ways to enhance services to current customers
  - j. Identify ways to provide services to potential customers
  - k. Ensure compliance with departmental policy and procedures
1. Timeframe and Teaching Method: Lecture and discussion - 1 hour

## **SUPPLY, PROCESSING & DISTRIBUTION (SPD) CONTINUING EDUCATION**

### **CUSTOMER SERVICE**

#### **Definition**

Customer service is defined as the art of knowing who your customers are, anticipating their needs, and delivering the goods and services required in an efficient, economical, timely and correct way, as well as promptly correcting any lapse in the provision of those goods and services. Good customer service also relates to the manner in which these goods and services are delivered. The customer deserves to be treated in a polite courteous manner at all times, whether they are an internal or external customer.

#### **Identifying Customers**

Your customers can be defined as anyone who is a recipient of your goods or services as defined above and may include patients, staff, vendor representatives, and co-workers. Internal customers are those people within the organization to which you provide direct support. External customers can be defined as those who indirectly benefit from the goods and services you provide, such as patients.

#### **Telephone Etiquette**

Many contacts are made using the telephone and the observance of good telephone etiquette reflects upon yourself, your department, and the hospital. Remember you are a representative of your organization. Some basic telephone etiquette includes:

- ◆ Answer promptly. In most cases the telephone should be answered by the third ring.
- ◆ Identify the department and yourself. Much confusion and wasted time can be avoided if you state clearly the name of your department and your name. You may also add a salutation, such as “Good morning” when you answer the telephone. Offering assistance is always welcomed by the caller.
- ◆ Speak clearly. This may sound simple to you; however, good communication is dependent upon both parties’ ability to understand the other. Never talk on the telephone while eating or when distracted. Give the caller your undivided attention.
- ◆ Verify information. It can be very helpful if you verify information before concluding the call. This can be done by repeating the information back for the caller. Always write down important information to better serve the customer. At a minimum, you should record the caller’s name, location, need(s), and call-back number.
- ◆ Let the caller know when they can expect delivery of goods or services. Determine if the need is emergent and prioritize accordingly.

## **Successful Personal Contacts**

Successful personal contacts are important to good customer service. Some tips for successful personal contacts include:

- ◆ Know your customer. Get to know your customers by remembering their names and location within the organization. This makes the customer feel that their needs are important to you. By knowing your customer, you can avoid conflicts and anger. One good method to get to know your customer is to meet face-to-face. For customers who usually use the phone only, a personal introduction creates an awareness of the persons involved.
- ◆ Anticipate needs. Through repeated contacts and knowledge of the functions of a department, you can often anticipate the needs of the customer. Sometimes their needs are routine. An example would be replenishment of ward supplies. Another example of anticipating the customer's need is to review the surgery schedule to gain an understanding of the need for case carts. Look for ways to anticipate the needs of the customer and your customers will appreciate you.
- ◆ Follow through. In a busy hospital setting, the needs of the customer can sometimes be challenging. A mistake may have occurred and will need to be corrected. By following through identified needs from beginning to end will ultimately better serve the customer and may save a life.
- ◆ Admit and correct mistakes. Mistakes are bound to happen..., it's human nature. You can enhance credibility and keep loyal customers by admitting your mistakes and taking immediate corrective action. An apology goes a long way and is always appreciated. By learning from our mistakes, we can continuously improve service. When a customer has made a mistake and has apologized, accept it graciously.
- ◆ Offer assistance. Often times the customer may not know how or from whom to obtain goods or services. By offering assistance, you can enhance patient care.
- ◆ Dignity and respect. Customer service demands treating the customer with dignity and respect. To get it, you have to give it.

## **Important Action For Customer Service**

- ◆ Post hours of operation, telephone numbers, and pager numbers. Your customers need to know when and how they can contact your department.
- ◆ Keep voice mail greetings current. If you are away from your office, the customer should know when to expect you or who to contact in your absence.

- ◆ Discuss potential changes. Network with your customers regarding proposed changes which may affect them and address their concerns before implementation.
- ◆ Keep staff and customers informed of changes. This is very important and will help avoid confusion.
- ◆ Develop rapport with customers and meet on a regular basis. As mentioned above, if you develop a relationship with your customers, you can enhance understanding and improve service. You can gain valuable insights into the needs of the customers by meeting with them on a regular basis. Use those meetings to listen to your customer. Once you have insight into their perspective, you can set out to improve your level of support. You may also identify new customers.
- ◆ Ensure compliance with departmental policies and procedures. This is very important to customer service as it creates consistency in the services provided and ensures the safety of the patient.

## **Conclusion**

In a hospital environment, all departments can directly influence the quality of care given to the ultimate customer, the patient. The patient deserves the best possible care. He and his family should have only positive experiences while receiving their care. It takes a collective and collaborative effort of all staff members to ensure the positive outcomes of the patient.

## CUSTOMER SERVICE QUIZ

1. Define customer service.
2. How do you know who your customers are?
3. List 4 actions for good customer service.
4. List 3 rules of good telephone etiquette.
5. What should you or your department do when a mistake is made?
6. How is compliance with internal policy and procedure related to effective customer service?

True or False (Circle one)

7. T   F      You should always let the senior technician answer the phone.
8.            T      F      You do not need the callers name if you know where they called from.
9.            T      F      If there are no complaints, your department must be providing the best possible service.
10.           T      F      V.A. patients prefer to be called customers.



## CUSTOMER SERVICE QUIZ

### ANSWER SHEET

1. (Free Text)
2. (Free Text)
3. (Free Text)
4. (Free Text)
5. (Free Text)
6. (Free Text)
7. False
8. False
9. True
10. True